

**STATEMENT OF FRAN P. MAINELLA, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE ENERGY
AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE FISCAL YEAR
2007 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

MARCH 14, 2006

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today at this oversight hearing on the FY 2007 budget proposal for the National Park Service (NPS). We thank you for your continuing support of the work we do on behalf of the American people to conserve our Nation's natural and cultural resources and to make them accessible to the public.

The FY 2007 budget request of \$2.156 billion for NPS supports goals to protect park resources, continue improvements in asset management, and achieve efficiencies in the management of park programs within the context of the Administration's goal of cutting the Federal budget deficit in half by 2009. Total funding is \$100.5 million below the enacted FY 2006 level. However, park operations funding would increase by \$23.4 million to \$1.742 billion. Specific increases for particular programs would strengthen the NPS in a number of key areas, and the innovative management approaches and business practices we are implementing will help us make more effective use of the funding NPS receives.

The FY 2007 budget request also contributes to the NPS Legacy Goals, which are: *management excellence, sustainability, conservation, outdoor recreation, and 21st Century relevancy*. Each goal includes a number of specific objectives, many of which dovetail with the priorities of this budget request. For example, the objectives of our management excellence goal include, among other things, effective law enforcement, improving training programs, continuing partnerships to meet science and research needs, and addressing the concessions backlog. Those are all activities that would be enhanced under this request.

Visitor Services and Safety

Of the approximately \$1.7 billion proposed for park operations, nearly \$1.093 billion is requested for "park base" funding, a \$20.6 million increase over FY 2006 that will help parks cover most of the cost of increased Federal pay due in FY 2007. The majority of park base funding is provided directly to park managers to pay for operating the parks, including providing for interpretive ranger programs, staffing at visitor centers, daily maintenance activities, and other programs and activities that enhance visitor services and protect resources.

This request sustains and builds on the significant park base increases of the two previous fiscal years--\$25 million in FY 2006 and \$63 million in FY 2005—that NPS received due to Congress's strong support for the National Park System. Enactment of the FY 2007 request will result in park base funding rising by \$177 million, or 19 percent, since FY 2001.

The FY 2007 request proposes key investments in visitor health and safety and law enforcement programs, including:

- \$500,000 for placing special agents in parks. These park-based special agents would provide investigative support for ranger staffs in parks that extend over large geographic areas, have numerous access points, and are in areas of Federal jurisdiction where State and local agencies many not have the authority, funding, or personnel to perform these services.
- \$750,000 for base funding for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Centrally funding FLETC, instead of paying for law enforcement training from individual park budgets, will allow parks to dedicate critical law enforcement funds to on-the-ground visitor and resource protection while still ensuring that essential training is made available to law enforcement personnel.
- \$2.8 million for high priority police operations, including icon park security and recruitment and training for the U.S. Park Police (USPP). This is expected to increase the force to 620 sworn officers by the end of FY 2007, up from 603 at the start of FY 2006. A comprehensive review of USPP Force requirements was conducted in accordance with recommendations contained in the recent National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) report. This funding would ultimately achieve a force strength recommended as a result of the review that followed the NAPA report.
- \$441,000 for the NPS Public Health Program, allowing NPS to adequately respond to potential outbreaks and disease transmission issues, and to conduct routine evaluations for safety of food, drinking water, wastewater, and vector-borne disease risks in parks. The request also sustains \$525,000 received in FY 2006 supplemental funding to address avian influenza.

Natural Resources Stewardship

The FY 2007 request includes some specific increases to help address some of our most pressing natural resource protection needs, including:

- \$2.4 million for funding NPS' commitments under the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000, which directs the NPS and the Federal Aviation Administration to collaborate on developing commercial air tour management plans for all parks where this activity occurs. These plans will help managers prevent or minimize adverse impacts on natural soundscapes and visitor experiences.
- \$1 million for completing a system of 32 networks throughout the National Park System that are identifying the "vital signs" of 272 natural resource parks. These inventory and monitoring networks share fieldwork, staff, equipment, and business practices leading to successful new partnerships with universities and researchers through Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units and Research Learning Centers.
- \$750,000 for enhancing existing exotic plant management teams to address severe damage caused by invasive species to natural resources and the economy. These teams will operate in three priority geo-regional areas—South Florida, the Northern Great Plains, and the Rio Grande River Basin.

Cultural Resources Stewardship

As part of the Administration's Preserve America initiative, the FY 2007 budget request proposes to focus resources for Preserve America grants, Save America's Treasures grants, and the Heritage Partnership program into a unified \$32.2 million American Heritage and Preservation Partnership. This initiative would allow for better coordination and greater efficiencies in meeting the Administration's goals for enhancing and expanding opportunities for cultural resource preservation. The combining of these programs would allow local communities to determine which strategies best suit their heritage needs and to apply to the most appropriate programs to conserve heritage resources and promote heritage tourism. Other cultural resource investments in the FY 2007 request include:

- \$1 million to initiate an effort to provide complete, accurate, and reliable information about cultural landscapes and historic and prehistoric structures, enabling NPS to make significant progress toward updating the Cultural Landscapes Inventory and the List of Classified Structures (Historic and Prehistoric) in FY 2007.
- \$39.7 million for Historic Preservation Fund matching grants to States, Territories, and Tribes to preserve historically and culturally significant sites.

Enhancing the NPS Asset Management Program

The FY 2007 request continues the Administration's substantial investment in reducing the NPS deferred maintenance backlog. The request includes \$393.5 million for facility maintenance, including a \$10 million increase for cyclic maintenance, and \$229.3 million for construction. Including the \$210 million for park roads provided through the Department of Transportation and \$100 million for maintenance from visitor fees, the Administration's deferred maintenance investment from FY 2002- FY 2007 would total \$5.6 billion. Despite a reduction in line-item construction of \$93 million, the \$933 million effort in FY 2007 toward reducing the deferred maintenance backlog is exactly equal to the five-year average effort from FY 2002-FY 2006. These investments have enabled NPS to make significant improvements in the condition of critical facilities and other assets that serve visitors and protect park resources.

In addition, NPS is transforming the agency's approach to managing and addressing its deferred maintenance backlog. During the past four years, NPS has been implementing the initial phase of an innovative asset management program focused on developing, for the first time, a comprehensive inventory and condition assessment of the agency's asset base, which includes everything from nearly 18,000 buildings to approximately 15,000 miles of paved and unpaved roads. Condition assessments on eight industry-standard assets, such as buildings, water systems, roads, and trails, will be completed at all parks by the end of 2006. Parks also have completed, for the first time, a prioritization of their asset inventory. This shift in emphasis for the agency is based on management reforms and performance measures, and features a state-of-the-art software system. These new tools will allow NPS to have a better understanding of the true cost of owning and operating structures.

NPS also will be able to refine budget estimates and identify maintenance needs based on the actual condition of facilities, and identify the resources needed to bring the highest priority assets

to an acceptable condition. Because of NPS's new approach to managing deferred maintenance, managers have a better understanding of both the quantity and condition of park assets, and greater accuracy when discussing park needs and accomplishments.

Continuing Management Reform

The NPS is being innovative and working toward reform in the way it manages natural and cultural resources, as well as in the way it manages money and information.

One of the ways we are continuing to promote management excellence this year is through the revision of the 2001 management policies. In response to the request of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, the NPS has begun the process of updating the policies—which is our guidebook for park managers to implement the NPS Organic Act—to ensure that we conserve the resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations, while providing for their current enjoyment. After an extensive public comment period which ended on February 25, the next step is for the comments to be compiled, considered, and reviewed by our career leadership team. The edited document will then be submitted to NPS employees and the National Park Service Advisory Board before any final product is approved by NPS and the Department. The proposed revisions would provide greater flexibility and tools for superintendents to make better and more informed decisions. They would maintain our strong commitment to the fundamental mission of the NPS to protect and allow for appropriate enjoyment of parks. One of the primary guiding principles is that, when there is conflict between the protection of resources and their use, conservation will be predominant.

In an attempt to move toward greater levels of budget and performance accountability, the NPS continues to expand the use of the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), activity-based costing, and preliminary planning efforts associated with competitive reviews. PART evaluations and recommendations continue to inform both budget formulation and program management decisions. PART reviews were conducted on four NPS program areas for the FY 2007 Budget Request: Visitor Services, External Programs–Technical Assistance, External Programs–Financial Assistance, and Concessions Management. The NPS has completed ten PART reviews since FY 2002 and is planning one PART review for the FY 2008 budget cycle.

The NPS continually works to further the integration of budget and performance. Over the past year, efforts have focused on a new core operations analysis process and the development of a NPS Park Scorecard. Our Core Operations Analysis is designed to assist park management in making fully informed decisions on staffing and funding alternatives that are based on realistic funding projections and tie to core mission goals. This process will ensure that funds are spent in support of a park's purpose, that funds are spent in an efficient manner, that a park's request for funding is based on accurate data, and that there are adequate funds and staff to preserve and protect the resources for which parks are responsible. The NPS goal is to integrate management tools, such as the Budget Cost Projection Model, Business Plans, Core Operations Analysis, and the Park Scorecard, to provide a more qualitative basis for decision-making.

The Park Scorecard is designed to be an indicator of park financial, operational, and managerial performance. It is used, in conjunction with other factors, to identify and evaluate base budget

increases and potential park performance if budget increases are received. The scorecard is used together with the Operations Formulation System (OFS) to offer context for proposed base budget increases and will eventually be integrated within the OFS system. In 2006, the newest version of the Park Scorecard will be tested, piloted, and integrated into the Regional and Servicewide budget formulation processes leading to a national priority list for park base funding requests for use in future budgets.

Two proposed increases in the FY 2007 request that would contribute significantly to improved management are:

- \$310,000 for managing and supporting the newly established Partnership Construction Process (Building Better Partnerships Program). The Service would secure outside expertise to assess the capacity of partners to raise funds and evaluate business models for economic development. The increase would also be used to manage the Monitoring and Tracking Database System to monitor fundraising efforts and partner construction projects, generate reports, and maintain the partnership webpage.
- \$911,000 for improving concessions contracting oversight so NPS can achieve its program goals of reducing the contracting backlog and effectively managing the concessions program.

Other Programs

As part of the President's effort to cut the budget deficit in half by 2009, the Administration had to make difficult choices in its FY 2007 budget request that resulted in reduced funding for some lower-priority programs. Funding for LWCF State grants is not being requested, with the exception of \$1.6 million to administer prior year grants. However, the request continues a limited amount of funding for Federal land acquisition, of which nearly \$22.7 million would be for the NPS portion of the Federal land acquisition program, including \$5 million to acquire critical land at the Flight 93 National Memorial and \$4 million to continue the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Grants program. These Civil War grants would garner a minimum of \$4 million in matching funds.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my summary of the FY 2007 budget request for NPS. We would be pleased to answer any questions you and the other members of the subcommittee may have.